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Mr. *Ely's*
S E R M O N,
AT THE
O R D I N A T I O N
O F H I S B R O T H E R,
The Rev. Mr. *David Ely.*





CHRIST's Ministers, Messengers of the
LORD of Hosts.

A

S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D A T T H E

O R D I N A T I O N

O F T H E

Rev. Mr. DAVID ELY,

T O T H E P A S T O R A L C A R E O F T H E C H U R C H O F
C H R I S T

I N

R I P T O N,

O C T O B E R 27, A. D. 1773.

By RICHARD ELY, A. M. *K*
Pastor of the church in *North-Bristol.*

Son of Man, I have set thee a watchman. Ezek. 33. 7.
Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the
words of this life. *Acts 5. 20.*

All scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable-----
that the man of God may be perfect. 2 Tim. 3. 16.

To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not accor-
ding to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Isa. 8. 20.

N E W - H A V E N :

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AN ORDINATION SERMON.

M A L A C H I II, 7.

FOR THE PRIESTS LIPS SHOULD KEEP KNOWLEDGE,
AND THEY SHOULD SEEK THE LAW AT HIS MOUTH :
FOR HE IS THE MESSENGER OF THE LORD OF
HOSTS.

IN the original constitution of the world, there was a perfection and glory in every part ;---and every creature in its original state, station and relation of being, had a glory and perfection ; as the whole was the contrivance of Him whose wisdom is infinite, his ways perfect, and his arm almighty.

Moral beings were formed with moral beauties and excellencies, and the nearer they were to the Divine Majesty, the more glorious were their natures and excellencies.

Those that were the inhabitants of the celestial world, were made pure and perfect spirits : Mighty in power, great in knowledge, and swift like the flashing lightening to perform their ministrations from the Lord.

And in this lower world, the divine Majesty saw fit to form a glorious being, in a gradation but a little lower than the angelic world. Infinite wisdom and goodness forming an animal system, most curious and wonderful, of the dust of the earth, animating it with an heaven-born principle, after the image of the great Creator ; and thus allied earth to heaven, owned him as his son, and without a mediator or an ambassador, the all-present Being was pleased to hold near and intimate converse with him ; as he delighted in the works

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works of his own hands, and the image of himself in the finishing stroke of this lower world.

In this estate the universe was happy, enjoying the unclouded smiles of the glorious Author of all things.

But divine revelation shews us, that some of the celestial spirits rebelled against their Maker, who looking on this happy world in innocence, envy'd the happy pair their glory and happiness.

The head therefore, of that rebellion, with all subtlety and malice, enters paradise, covering his cursed design, ensnares and tempts the happy pair, to transgress the sacred law of heaven, and run the risk of death. But oh the fatal consequence that attended! He found God's threatening true--his sentence irrevocable, himself and all his posterity involved in ruin; and this whole system that was put under him, subject to vanity. ||

Man fell under the curse, and condemnation of the holy law: no longer delighted with those happy interviews of his Maker, which in innocence, were the *paradise of paradise* itself.

Now at the sound of his approach, the foolish rebel attempts to fly, and hide his guilty head from the all-seeing eye, and is utterly unmeet for near and intimate communion with him, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and with whom evil shall not dwell.

But notwithstanding the sin and unworthiness of guilty man, as he was led astray by sedition, the God of boundless love and goodness, was pleased to have thoughts of mercy towards him, whilst for the *complicated wickedness* and malice of satan in seducing man, he curses him above all; † binds him in chains of everlasting darkness to the great day of retribution; whilst heaven in infinite compassion and wisdom devised a way, by which the *glory of God, the honour of his law, and every of his divine perfections might be illustrated*; satan defeated and man saved: even by the gift of his only begotten, to ransom a ruined world.

This counsel and device of infinite love and grace
God

|| Rom. 8. 20, 22.

† Gen. 3. 14. Because thou hast done this, thou art curse above, &c.

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God at first in some measure opens and discovers to our first parents ; assuring them there should be a seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head, and he should bruise his heel. And by immediately instituting sacrifices, in a figure shews them the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, to take away sin.

And after, by the Spirit of his Son at sundry times, and in divers manners by prophets, opens to view *the glorious news of salvation by the glorious Emmanuel.*

And having published his infinitely gracious design, he calls and sends ambassadors, not of angels, but of men : to search the divine oracles, and to publish to their fellow mortals the unsearchable riches of his grace ; and commands his people to wait on them for teaching and enlightening in the way of life; that they might know the path to glory, and be excited and animated by the glorious *manifesto* of heaven, to strive to enter into glory, and by the terrors of the Lord to flee from the wrath to come.

In the words before us we are shewn by God himself, the duty and work of those whom God hath called to minister in sacred things.

And of those to whom they are sent.---

And the high and honorary character of those, who are employed in the sacred and important work of the ministry.

These God shews us are his ambassadors ; intrusted with a message to a lost world. They are *the messengers of the Lord of hosts.*

Their important duty, is to be furnished with knowledge and understanding in the sacred law, and instructions of him who sends them as his messengers, that they may be thoroughly acquainted with the important Business that the Lord of hosts intrusts them with.

They must also be endued with gifts and capacities to disperse knowledge, or we may know they are not the ambassador's of the Lord ; for this he hath given as an essential character,---*apt to teach.*

As God thus condescends to send his messengers, so with all readiness and care, they to whom they are sent

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sent should attend at their mouths, for sacred instructions of infinite importance to their immortal souls : they must watch at wisdom's gates, and wait at the posts of her doors, to hear all things whatsoever the messengers of the Lord of hosts are commissioned to publish, ---even all the words of this law.

Ambassadors from princes and states, are sent on business of no small and trifling concerns : so the ambassadors that are commissioned from the King of Kings and Lord of Hosts, and sent to this fallen world, they are sent on no trifling concern : but the message contains matters of the last importance, and of infinite and eternal consequence to this lower world, which most nearly concern the honour and glory of the King of Heaven. It therefore requires the greatest attention and study of messengers to discharge with wisdom and fidelity, their important message, as well as those to whom they are sent, with the utmost care to take heed how they entertain that message, which so nearly concerns the honor and glory of the Supreme King, and their own eternal welfare.

The messengers of the Lord of Hosts are sent with a commission to publish the everlasting gospel, and to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ : to inform a sinful, guilty, rebel world, that God is now on a mercy seat : that now there is an accepted time and day of grace : that God is waiting to be gracious, giving them opportunity to come and make peace with God by faith in the glorious Redeemer.

They are commissioned to shew unto the lost world the infinite bowels of compassion that hath spared the *only begotten, who is the brightness of glory*, out of his bosom, to redeem them from the curse and condemnation of his broken law.

They are authorised to testify that God hath thus laid help on one mighty, able to save to the uttermost, and therefore to assure even the greatest sinner that there is forgiveness with God, and that he is ready to pardon the greatest rebel in his kingdom, who in time will accept of the offered mercy thro' faith in him, who thro' the eternal Spirit offered himself a spotless sacrifice for sin.

They

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They are sent to discover the Lord Jesus in his divine and human nature ; the great mystery of godliness, *God manifest in the flesh*, and *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*.

They are to set forth a crucified Saviour *lifted up* on the cross, that all might be *drawn* to him ; that soul-wounded, sin-sick, and distressed souls might look unto him and be healed, as Israel looked to the brazen serpent.

They are bound to discover to the soul convicted of sin and guilt, and overwhelmed with a sight and sense of its misery ; how that God can *be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*, who *was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities* ; and that by his obedience unto death, he hath brought in everlasting righteousness. That *by him all that believe shall be justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of bestial sacrifices*. And that God in the gospel *bath set forth his Son to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood to declare his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* *

They are sent to discover in the most striking manner unto a miserable world, *the glory, honor, immortality and eternal life* that Christ hath purchased, and is gone into the heavenly world to prepare for the reception of every soul that shall accept of the offered mercy.

They are to labour to reclaim sinners from the error of their ways, *to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and satan unto God* † : And beseech and intreat such as are unreconciled, to be reconciled to God and accept of eternal life, as offered in the gospel.

We then are *ambassadors for Christ, as tho' God did beseech by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* †

And least the glorious things discovered in the gospel should not attract the sinner ; but he should still be swallowed up with the present vain allurements that enchant the

* Rom. 3. 25, 26. † Acts 26. 18. † 2 Cor. 5. 20.

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the darkned mind ; the messengers of the Lord of Hosts are to discover the awful terrors of the Lord, and thereby persuade sinners, * that if possible (by these considerations) the stupid soul might be awakened, terrified, and cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?* and stired up to flee from the wrath to come.

They must from time to time, as it were, lead sinners to take an awakening view of the scripture representation of the miseries of the damned ; shew them their original corruption, and practical abominations ; that by nature and practice they are children of wrath : and labour, if possible, to fix on their minds a serious consideration of the irrevocable decree of heaven, that unless they repent they *shall perish*. That unless they believe on him whom God hath sent, they shall be damned. These things they must do, and at the same time realize, that unleis the divine Spirit seal their instructions, the planting of a Paul, and watering of an Apollos will be to no saving effect.

Further, the messengers of the Lord of Hosts are to shew, that God hath appointed a day of strict and awful jndgment, and constituted Christ the judge † ; before whom every knee shall bow ; at whose awful bar all nations shall stand, and small and great receive with the utmost impartiality according to their works.

This is but a brief summary of the message, that the messengers of the Lord of Hosts are intrusted with.

A message of infinite love and compassion, as well as of solemn awakening, to a perishing world. A message committed to men that is worthy of angels, which they would have exulted to have been the ambassadors of.

With what rapture were the angelic host filled, who had the honor to attend the *angel* that published the Saviour's birth ! They praise God in an exalted anthem, saying, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth PEACE, good will towards MEN.* ‡

This message intrusted with men is truly great and glorious ; and arduous is the employment of the messengers of the Lord. And duly to discharge this

great

* 2 Cor. 5. 11. † Acts 10. 42. ‡ Luk. 2. 13, 14.

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great and important embassy, their prime and special work, is critically to search and study the instructions of the Lord of Hosts to his messengers, and to treasure up in their minds a store of sacred and divine knowledge, that their lips might keep it and be able to disperse it to those to whom they are sent; and publish the whole counsel of God.

An ambassador from an earthly court, must critically search and understand his instructions, to know what he may negotiate, and may go no further at his peril.

In like manner the prime and important duty of the messengers of the Lord of Hosts is, critically and carefully to search their instructions from the court of heaven and thereby furnish themselves with heavenly and divine knowledge, and have the word of God dwell in them richly, which is a pure and perfect rule, given by inspiration, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the messenger of the Lord of Hosts may be perfect, thoro'ly furnished unto all good works.*

Herein therefore should the Lord's messengers meditate day and night, that they might be perfect and understand their commission; for if they go contrary thereto, they do it at their peril. For it they declare any other law, any other gospel than what is in their instructions, says the inspired apostle, *let him be accursed.*†

If there was more close and careful attention to the sacred oracles, more days and nights spent in searching them, and less studying of such as set up to lead away disciples after them, by which minds are in danger of being led away with every wind of doctrine, would there not be less divisions among the messengers of the Lord? and less danger of being such as should bring a curse upon themselves by going contrary to their instructions?

Christ directs not to men, but to *search the scriptures;* which only give the true and infallible testimony of himself and his will. And by his spirit in his prophet says, *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak*

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not

2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. † Gal. 1. 8.

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*not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**

This word and the scriptures that Christ directs to search, is the old testament ; for then there was nothing pen'd of the new.

They are therefore to study the law, the gospel law of grace, from the foundation discovery of the promised **SEED**, thro' the ceremonial dispensation of the gospel, and the prophets, and psalms, and especially in the more clear discovery of the new-testament, which is as an expository supplement to the gospel preached before in the *old* ; in which there is a glorious and clear light, thrown upon the life and immortality, that before was more darkly made manifest to the church of God. They should therefore carefully adhere to the study of the sacred oracles ; and not study men so as to bend their minds to comply with their principles ; tho' they may be by many esteemed *a Paul, or an Apollos, or a Cephas.* But they should bow their minds to the teachings of the great *Prophet*, whom we are commanded to hear. They should search it till they see and understand it, as a *pure, perfect and consistent law* ; perfectly harmonious, for this it most surely is.—*The law of the Lord is perfect.*

The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets + ; and the spirit of Christ in one prophet, is consistent with the same spirit in another, thro' the prophetic revelations and doctrines ; therefore if by their narrow minds they have not as yet attained, to understand the words of the wise and their DARK SAYINGS, ‡ and the deep things of God so as to be consistent with what is clearly revealed, they ought to suspend their judgment, and wait on God for the discovery of the truth : so far as is requisite for their duty, and consistent with his wise counsel. Whatsoever doctrines any deliver, however popular, if their instructions and consequences are counter to the *clear and plain doðrines* of inspiration ; they may know they are built not on Christ and his word, but the *heated and darkened imaginations* of human minds, whatever light and knowledge the authors

* Isa. 8. 20. + 1 Cor. 14. 32. ‡ Prov. 1. 6.

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authors may boast of. Multitudes delude themselves and others thro' an ambition of discovering something new, from the dark and mysterious places of scripture, which are reserved for the *clear intelligence* of future ages of the church : as many places of sacred writ are now made plain, which were in ages past, dark and unsearchable, even by the prophets themselves that revealed them.*

Those places that yet remain dark, and matters too high for them ; they do not as David, refrain from exercising themselves *in*, Psal. 131. 1. but rack their inventions till they form a discovery of their own imaginations ; and elate with a new fancied discovery, they will torture the plainest scriptures, to make them confess their sentiments ; or reject as superannuated those that manifestly would overthrow their plan.

And as the messengers of the Lord are thus to search the scriptures : so also they are to give themselves to prayer. They should be much in prayer to God that hath commissioned them ; that he would open their understandings to understand the scriptures : That he would grant them *to be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding* † : And thus become burning and shining lights, in the midst of the golden candlesticks ; and preserve them from errors and keep them found in the faith. That he would enable them to choose out acceptable words, and hold forth the word of truth ; and be able by sound doctrine, to *guide the flock, convince gainsayers, enlighten the enquiring, warn the obstinate, comfort mourners, and give to every one a portion in due season.*

Also that they might be endued with divine fortitude, to go forth in an evil world, in their great Master's service, tho' among wolves, and to speak boldly as they ought to speak ; and be faithful to God and souls, and not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

And as they are sent with a message to perishing souls ; so they must be much in prayer for them ; and as Aaron, bear them upon their hearts before God. Their hearts desire and prayer should be, *that they might be saved.* They

* 1 Pet. 1. 19, 21, 22. † Col. 1. 9.

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They should pray for those who have no heart to pray for themselves : For light to those in darkness, and comfort to those that mourn in Zion. That the feeble might be strengthened with might by the spirit in the inner man. That blind eyes might be opened, deaf ears unstopen. And look to God that their labour for them might be successful thro' the divine blessing : considering they may plant and water, but the fruit must be from God.

Their work also is publicly to declare their message ; to publish the whole counsel of God, and to keep back nothing that may be profitable to the souls to whom they are sent. Their charge from the Lord of Hosts is, *Go, stand and speak in the temple, to the people all the words of this life.** Their lips are to keep knowledge, but not to themselves ; they are to disperse it, and their mouths must be opened in the cause of Christ and not shut.

They must shew their people their danger and misery, and the way of recovery. Must preach Christ and him crucified, and labour to bring them to see Jesus. He must be the sum of their knowledge, and the substance of their teachings, *even Christ evidently set forth crucified before their eyes.*†

They must warn the wicked ; lift up their voices and not spare to shew them their transgression, and set before them their danger and misery, and the need of a divine change : of being born again, *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

And as they are to labour in doctrine, so also in word, in private converse and direction to the enquiring and distressed souls of their charge---Open their doors with cheerfulness to receive them, counsel, enlighten and assist them against the wiles of the devil, and guide their feet in the plain path to glory ; and not embarrass them with doubtful disputations.

They also are carefully to take heed to go before the flock, in all ways of virtue, piety and strict godliness, and be ensamples to the flock, treading in Christ's steps, that those to whom they are sent, may be followers of them, even as they are of Christ.

* Acts 5. 20. † Gal. 3. 1.

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As the great Head of the church hath appointed the sacred ordinances of the new testament, baptism and the Lord's supper : so he hath shewn us that it is their duty to administer those seals of the new testament.

They are to admit the infant seed of his people who are *in covenant with him*, and duly adhere thereto. Hereby they are to admit them into the family of heaven, and members of Christ's visible body the church ; for *those that are baptized into Christ have put on Christ.** It is at their peril therefore, if they refuse the seed of his covenant people, the seal of his covenant, and cast them out of the inheritance of the Lord, and disinherit them from the *promise* that belongs to all whom the Lord our God hath called. They are to teach the nature, end and design of those holy institutions, and then the importance of a sacred and solemn attendance thereupon. They are to visit those that are on beds of sickness, and pray with and for them.

And in that time when the eyes of mortals are more taken off from the vanities of time, and are looking into the eternal world, improve it to awaken those who may have been secure, and concur with every *breeze* of the *Holy Spirit* upon their souls, to excite them to see the vanity of the world, the worth of their souls, and to engage in newness of life.

They are to support the faith of the true christian by counsels, by shewing them the gracious promises of the gospel, the faithfulness of God, the sure covenant of grace sealed with the blood of Christ, and the unchangeableness of his love to those to whom he hath given to believe on his Son. Hereby to assist the dying christian to commit his departing soul into the hands of the great Redeemer, with an humble assurance that He to whom he commits his soul, *is able to keep and will keep that which he commits to him against that day.*†

And as they are to feed the sheep of Christ's flock : so also they are to take a tender care of the lambs thereof,

* Gal. 3. 27, † 2 Tim. 1. 12,

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thereof, and like the good shepherd carry them as in their arms, teaching them the first principles of the oracles of God, adapt their expositions of the law of grace to their tender years, that they may grow in knowledge and in favour with God and men : that hereby having an early foundation laid in their minds, they may be preserved from errors in riper years.
Prov. 22. 6.

They are also to see to it, that the sacred discipline of Christ's kingdom is duly maintained and preserved. The *unclean* removed ; the *unruly* and *heretical admo-*
nished, counselled and warned by divine rules. --- The *peni-*
tent and humble restored ; that the church may become *terrible as an army with banners* : preserved and kept pure, to be presented as a *chaste spouse to the glorious Bridegroom,*

These things the *messengers of the Lord of hosts* are to perform with *simplicity, sincerity and truth*, and thus to fulfil their embassage, with a single eye to the glory of God and the Redeemer, and the salvation of those to whom they are sent. They must thus discharge their work as it is the command of the *Lord of hosts*, and as they themselves must soon be called home from their embassy. They must die as well as others, and give up an account of their betrustment and fidelity to God and those to whom they are sent ; and must stand on a *par* with the rest of mankind, to have strict justice take place.

These things the apostle improves, to animate his son Timothy, to a faithful discharge of his message, saying, *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom. Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.*||

They must discharge their message with fidelity, that they may have inward peace and comfort ; and be able with satisfaction to reflect on the *solemn thought* of soon being recalled, to give up their account. What peace can a messenger of the *Lord of hosts* enjoy, whose soul

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soul is conscious of being unfaithful? --- But with what joy and comfort, can a faithful messenger reflect upon his soon returning to render his account, if he has the testimony of his conscience, that he hath faithfully discharged his message from the LORD! How can he then with the apostle look to the crown of reward, who said, *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give at that day!* †

And as this is the great and important work and duty lying on the messengers of the LORD of hosts; so there are important duties lying upon those to whom they are sent, relative to God and his messengers.

They are bound to receive with the greatest thankfulness and gratitude the messengers of the LORD; and adore his infinite love, goodness and compassion, in devising the glorious way of reconciliation: sparing his Son out of his bosom, and sending his messengers to publish the glad-tidings of peace by Jesus. And to adore his goodness who is pleased to confer gifts and graces on men; to qualify them for the great and important work assigned them, and hath engaged to be with them.

And it is the important duty of those to whom they are sent, to attend upon a preached gospel. Diligently to attend to the law dispensed, to hear what the Lord shall speak unto his people. --- They are publicly to assemble in season, out of season, but especially upon the day of sacred rest, and present themselves, as Cornelius and those with him, with a sense of the Divine Presence and inspection. --- *We are all here present before God, to bear all things whatsoever are commanded thee of God.* § They should also seriously consider, in what light the Lord looks upon his messengers, in their performing their ministrations; and their reception, or rejection by those to whom he sends them. That they are personating Christ, are ambassadors from God in his stead: and that those that hear them hear him; and that those that

‡ 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8. § Acts 10. 33.

that neglect and despise the law from their mouths, refuse to hear the Lord himself, as it is his law they publish. *He that beareth you, &c.* *He that despiseth you, &c.* † They should consider therefore, that it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for *Sodom* and *Gomorah*, than for those that despise the tenders of the gospel from his faithful messengers. The people are not only to seek the law at their mouth in public administrations; but apply thereto for private direction and enlightening in their doubts and darkness, to be assisted against the snares and temptations of the devil, which are ordinarily many and distressing to the soul, that is awaking out of spiritual sleep, and bethinking himself of returning to Christ. How, have many, often found more light and instruction by a few hours of thus seeking knowledge, than in months or years publicly attending: as then, they particularly lay open their troubles, and the messenger whose lips keep knowledge, shall know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary *, by particular application.

They should have an high esteem, honour and respect for the messengers of the Lord, as hereby their instructions will have a more easy, and acceptable access into their hearts. They should therefore esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake; and beautiful in their eyes, should be the feet of those that preach the gospel and bring glad tidings of salvation §.

They must be careful of receiving slanders and accusations against them; lest prejudices or any root of bitterness spring up which shall darken their eyes, and deafen their ears to their message; and give satan power to steal away the most pure wheat of the gospel, and make them a favor of death instead of life.

Paul could not profit where prejudice ruled, and therefore was not suffered to minister there. Acts 22. 18, 19, 20, 21.

They are to submit to their instructions and admonitions with calmness, in their exercising the rule that is committed to them: says the apostle, *Obey them that have*

† Luke 10. 16. * Isa. 50. 4. § Rom. 10. 15.

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have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls §, not for your haltings.

Further, they are to be much in prayer to God for his messengers, and bear them upon their hearts before God. For their work is great and weighty, their snares and temptations many, to divert them from a faithful and courageous discharge of their betrustments ; and they are but men. They should look to God, that he would abundantly furnish them with ministerial gifts and graces. With zeal, not heated, but according to knowledge, that they may speak boldly as they ought to speak ; that they may be filled with a sense of the greatness of their work, the worth of souls, and faithfully discharge their message, that they may save themselves and those that hear them. Also that they might be kept from errors, and come forth to them in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.

Finally, as it is the duty of the messengers of the Lord of Hosts, to devote and consecrate themselves to their service to whom they are sent, and to feed them with spiritual bread ; so also it is the special duty of those to whom they are sent, to take a kind, tender and sufficient care of them, as to their temporal subsistence ; that they may give themselves wholly to their work, and not be taken up and diverted from it by cares, to provide for themselves and theirs, or deny the faith and be worse than infidels *.

It is the ordinance of him that sends them, that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel. || The apostle therefore directs that those that are taught in the word, should communicate to him that teacheth, in every good thing. + Those therefore to whom God sends his messengers, should lock on their support as the offering of the Lord, and obligated not from man, but from the Lord of hosts ; and therefore with all cheerfulness contribute, to the comfortable and honourable support of his messengers ; that they may give themselves wholly to their sacred employment ; that their profiting may appear to all men : and themselves reap the happy fruits of their painful labours for their souls.

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I would

§ Heb. 13. 17. * 1 Tim. 5. 8. || 1 Cor. 9. 14. + Gal. 6. 6.

I would now address myself in few words, to my Fathers and Brethren in the ministry, present.

REVEREND SIRS,

I have not the vanity to think of informing your minds of any thing new, relative to your duty as messengers of the LORD of Hosts. But this brief, tho' imperfect recognition, of our great work, and the importance of it : and that it will redound to the eternal honour and welfare, or misery and disgrace of ourselves and those that hear us, may thro' divine blessing serve a valuable end ; even to excite and animate each of us, to see to it that we are found faithful to God and souls, in the fulfilment of the glorious and important message committed to our trust.

A message, wherein the honour of God, our own honour and glory here and hereafter, and the eternal happiness of those to whom we are sent, is so nearly concerned.

May these reflections excite each of us, with the greatest care and attention, to search our instructions from the King of heaven ; and make it our chief care to have our knowledge in divine things, *spring only from the perfect law of God, which is pure enlightening the eye.* *

May our ideas of sacred things be moulded thereby, and not fix on our minds any darling *tenet* ; and then to support it, put the law to the rack to make it give evidence to our favorite maxims.

It is a day in which, if ever, the messengers of the Lord should search the scriptures, and make them (and not the imperfect works of men) the foundation of all their knowledge, and never rest till they find a perfect *harmony*, between the *sacred law and testimony*, from the first discovery of the promised *SEED*, to the closing scene ; wherein he saith, *behold I come quickly* ; to the rejoicing of the apostle, who answers, *Amen, even so come Lord Jesus.*

May we from this fountain of light furnish our lips more and more with divine knowledge, that we may be able to speak a word in season to the weary soul, and

* Psal. 19. 8.

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and dispense the true grace of God ; and with *fidelity* to our great Lord and Master, *usefulness* to our respective charges, and *comfort* to our own souls, fulfil our message from the LORD of Hosts, and have many souls for the crown of our rejoicing ; and finally be admitted to have an happy part among those *wise*, who shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and them that turn many to righteousness, as the STARS for ever and ever *.

I turn myself now to him who is this day to be constituted a messenger of the LORD to this people.

Dear Brother, both in the bonds of nature, and in the service of our common Lord and Saviour :

You are this day *solemnly* to be set apart as a *messenger of the LORD of Hosts*, to this part of his flock, and fixed as a watchman upon this part of his Jerusalem, *and never to hold thy peace day nor night*. Isai. 62. 6. Here providence appears to point out your work during your abode in this transitory world. These, *these* are the souls to be solemnly committed to your charge. O solemn thought ! These are to seek the *law at thy mouth* : to whom you are daily to come forth, and stand in the temple, and speak unto them all the words of this law of life, discovered in the unerring oracles of truth.

The work is one of the greatest in the world, and will have a special influence in the eternal world, relative to yourself and those to whom you are sent ; either of consummate happiness or the deepest misery.

Your work as it is great, so it is a work that is attended with peculiar difficulties in the faithful discharge of it ; which requires the wisdom of the serpent and innocence of the dove. Difficulties which nothing but experience will perfectly discover. *And who is sufficient for these things ?* † Surely we are not of ourselves, and the stoutest heart must shrink at the thoughts of taking it upon himself, if he has a due sense of the same. But blessed be the great Head of the Church, who hath all power, and in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell ; that he hath left his gracious declaration for the support, and encouragement

* Dan. 12. 3. † 2 Cor. 2. 16.

couragement of those he calls to engage in this important work. *Lo I am with you to the end of the world!** Keep with Christ and he will keep with you, and if Christ is with us and for us, what shall be too hard!

My hearts desire and prayer for you therefore (as well as for myself) is, that you may have much of his divine presence with you, that you may be faithful and successful.

Undertake not in your own strength, but in the strength of the **LORD** of hosts.

And in order to perform your message aright, see to it that your lips are furnished with divine knowledge.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, that you may be able to teach and admonish,---Meditate in the sacred oracles which are able to make the messenger of the Lord, *thoroughly furnished unto every good work.*

To the law and to the testimony, if you would receive divine light ; (and not to those wandering stars that lead to darkness, excentric from the divine light) where-to we shall do well if we take heed, as to a light that shines in a dark world.

Especially attend to the more clear discovery of the gospel, that casts a light on life and immortality. Herein future and eternal things are set in the most clear and striking light. The vail on Moses's face taken off, and things appear in a striking and dazzling light. All the glories and terrors of the tremendous day of judgment are displayed to view. The Person before whom every knee shall bow ; his glorious retinué and spotless throne described. And the final issue of that great day, in the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the everlasting misery of the wicked. Future and eternal things are brought to knowledge, and almost to view.---Heaven hath pen'd and sent down to us the songs and praises of the angelic choir. Heaven is unvailed, and hell hath no covering. We are made almost to see the righteous in their glory, and the wicked in their misery. We are made almost to hear the *ballelujahs* of the one, and the *doleful wailings* and *lamentations*

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lamentations of the other ; that till death draws the curtain of flesh, we may not look for a clearer discovery of the eternal world.

These discoveries, you are to present in *lively views*, to make deep, and striking impressions on the righteous, and the wicked : to excite each to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life ; and be able with comfort to look forward to the great day of audit.

Your instructions are, to be a watchman to the *wicked, vile, unregenerate*, as well as to the *righteous*.

You are to call as in God's name to the wicked, that are wandering from God and his law. *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die.* *

You are to cry aloud and spare not : to lift up your voice like a trumpet, and shew God's visible people (to whom you are sent) their transgression and their sins.

You are to be faithful to warn the wicked or answer for their eternal ruin. *Son of Man, I have set thee a watchman to the house of Israel : therefore thou shalt bear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die ; if THOU DOST NOT SPEAK to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man SHALL DIE IN HIS INIQUITY ; but his BLOOD will I REQUIRE AT THINE HAND.* §

You, as an ambassador of God, in Christ's stead, are to warn them, and to beseech those that are unreconciled, to be reconciled to God. ||

It is astonishing that any who have ever given the slightest look on their instructions, should imagine they have no special message to the unregenerate.

Hold thou up to their view, from time to time, the terrors of the Lord from his mouth : bring them as before the tremendous bar of Christ, and shew them, that there they *must* give an account for so much as every idle word.

Lead them as it were to the *prison door*, to listen to the *wailings of the prisoners of wrath* ; whilst they are *prisoners of hope*, that destruction from the Lord might

* Ezek. 33. 11. § Ezek. 33. 7, 8. ¶ 2 Cor. 5. 20.

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be a terror to them ; and awaken them to cry out as of old, *what shall we do* ; and direct to that blood of the covenant, by which the prisoners may be set free. Zech. 9. 11.

Deal tenderly with those that are pricked in their hearts, and trembling at the word. Resolve their doubts, dissipate their fears ; assist them against the temptations of the devil, who will now roar against them.

Shew them that there is an infinite fullness in Christ : that he hath *gold tryed in the fire*, *eye-salve* to give sight ; *white robes* for their covering ; *rest and ease* for the *weary*, *strength and power* for the *weak*, and those that have no might ; *bread of life* for the *hungry* ; *wine* that is *drink indeed* for the *thirsting soul* : and that there is a glorious welcome to all these things ; and that he that comes for them *shall in no wise be cast out*.

Thus as a spiritual labourer at the high-way to Zion, make *crooked places strait*, and the *rough places smooth* ; *fill every valley*, and *lay low every mountain and hill*, ¶ that appears in the way of him that is setting out for the New-Jerusalem. Feed the children of God with *milk* and with *strong meat*, according as they are able to bear ; that they may be built up in their most holy faith, and *arrive to the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus* ; and become *strong in the faith*, giving *glory to God*, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*.

DEAR BROTHER,

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit ; and may he give you sensibly to experience the comfort of his supporting word to his messengers, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*.

I would now address myself in few words to the aged Pastor of this Flock.

REVEREND SIR,

You have for a long series of years, been put in trust with the gospel message to this people ; * even until

† *Isai. 40. 4.*

* The Rev. Mr. *Jedidiah Mills*, was the first Pastor of the Church of Christ in Kipton, who was ordained the 12th of Feb. 1724, having arrived to a good old age, being in the 77th year of

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until old age, and grey-headed, God hath not forsaken you, who have I trust, faithfully discovered his salvation to the generation that is now gone before you, and to those their children who have risen up in their father's stead.

And many, I hope, and trust thro' the divine blessing attending your labours, have receiv'd saving illumination in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and been savingly united to him.

Many of your charge are gone before you into the eternal world, and I trust, entered into the joys of their Lord, there waiting to meet you shortly in glory; who will be a part of your crown of rejoicing as you will theirs. And many we trust, yet with us, who are blessing God for you, as their spiritual father, who have begotten them through the gospel.

And as your arduous work is too great for your advanced years to bear alone; I rejoice with you, Sir, that your flock are willing to relieve you in it, and yet to feed you at the altar, according to divine institution.

It affords pleasure, that the choice they have made, is also your own with them, that you can with comfort think of leaving them, not as sheep without a shepherd; but with one you hope and trust will feed them with the sincere milk of the gospel of truth, who seek the law at his mouth.

May you yet live, and by your aged counsels and experience, be instead of eyes to them, and a rich blessing to him, who in his tender years, is this day to be set with you over this people, who I hope and trust will not despise the counsel of the aged.

May you now with comfort reflect on your embassage, and seeing the time draws near, in which you must return to him who hath betrusted you therewith; may you be able to say with the apostle, *The time of my departure*

is fixed; *and* *my* *departure* *is* *not* *in* *darkness;* *but* *I* *walk* *in* *the* *light* *of* *the* *world,* *as* *it* *is*.
Feb. 1. 1781
of his age, and goth of his ministry; having been a laborious and truly evangelical preacher of the gospel. The success of whose labours, to the praise of divine Grace, have been remarkable in several revivals of religion among the people of his charge, as well as more extensively, by occasional preaching abroad.

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departure is at hand, and I am now ready to be offered; I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give me at that day. §

And when time shall be no more with you, may guardian angels attend your spirit to the realms of bliss.---May you find an open entrance ministered to you, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and meet with that happy sentence, *well done good and faithful messenger, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.**

A word in the next place to the church and people of God in this place.

DEARLY BELOVED,

We rejoice with you this day, in the uncommon and happy unanimity of this church and society, in the choice of one to be set over you in the Lord. *That there are no divisions among you; but that ye are perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment.* We look upon it as an happy omen of your future peace, and that God's presence is, and still shall be with you whilst you dwell in love; and also an omen that God hath here much people for himself.

We rejoice that you have manifested such a wise and prudent zeal for the cause of Christ, and the peace and welfare of his kingdom among you: that whilst Aaron is living, an Eleazar might be as it were clothed with his robes; that you might not be left as sheep without a shepherd, *to wander upon every mountain and hill, and none to seek after you.*†

We rejoice to see your zeal, and such a willingness to contribute of carnal things, that you may be made partakers of spiritual. Honorably to take care for him that is engaging in your service, and by no means neglecting him who hath spent his days and strength for your souls. May God bestow on you a double portion of spiritual blessings. And I trust brethren, it is an happy presage, that there are many blessings for you, of the upper springs, which shall be poured out upon you and yours.

Brethren,

§ 2 Tim. 6. 8, * Mat. 25. 23. 1 Cor. 1, 10. † Ezek. 34. 6.

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Brethren, receive him whom the Lord hath sent to you, as the messenger of the LORD of Hosts. Look to God for him, that his lips may be more and more furnished with divine knowledge ; that he may daily come forth to you in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace. Brethren pray for him. Your constant, fervent prayers for him who have an interest at the throne of grace, will return into your own bosoms, and bring down blessings for yourselves and your children. Wherefore if you love him, if you love yourselves, if you love divine blessings which God bestows by his messengers, pray for him. Strengthen and encourage him in his work. Let nothing be wanting on your part to make his work effectual and delightful. Receive him in the Lord with gladness, and hold him in reputation for his work sake. Seek the law at his mouth. Weaken not his hands by hard usage, groundless jealousies and complaints ; it will be unprofitable for yourselves. Esteem him not your enemy when he deals closely and faithfully with your souls. Remember he is but a man, tho' the messenger of the LORD of Hosts : Therefore look not for angelic perfection, but remember he is subject to like passions with yourselves.* Let therefore your love continue to draw a veil over those human frailties that are found even in the best of men, and make him not an offender for a word.§

Finally brethren, as you are perfect, and undivided, watch against every root of bitterness ; and be ye still perfect ; be of one mind ; live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you ; for there the LORD commands his blessing, even life forever more. || AMEN.

* Acts 14. 15. § Isai. 29. 21. || 2 Cor. 13. 11. Psal. 133. 3.

A C H A R G E by the Rev. *Stephen Johnson.*

BY the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, (after the pattern shewn us in the gospel) we ordain you, DAVID ELY, a minister of Christ and pastor of the flock of Christ in this place, and co-pastor with the senior pastor. And we solemnly charge you in the presence of God, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the elect angels, and this great congregation ; take solemn heed to this sacred ministry, to fulfil it and every part of it. Preach the word ; be instant in season and out of season ; teach, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Preach the pure word of God in it's simplicity---sound doctrine which cannot be condemned, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Approve yourself a wise and faithful steward of the manifold grace and mysteries of God. Preach the unsearchable riches of Christ ; and from warm affection to Christ and souls, recommend the Saviour as worthy of all acceptance. Deliver the whole counsel of God ; keep back nothing honorary to God, to the gospel of Christ and profitable to souls. Administer the sacraments of the new-testament, baptism and the Lord's supper, to meet subjects, and in due season. Administer the censures of the gospel to the guilty subjects of them, with wisdom and faithfulness ; they that sin before all, rebuke before all, that others may fear. Do all without partiality, in gospel simplicity, without preferring one before another. Approve yourself a faithful watchman for souls, watching as one that must give an account at the bar of God ; and if souls are lost through your neglect, their blood will be required of you : Therefore, give loud, seasonable and solemn warning, whether they will hear or forbear ; that if you cannot pluck the wicked as brands out of the burnings, you may happily save your own soul. Acquit yourself the faithful shepherd ---feed the flock of God over which you are made an overseer,

overseer, according to the instructions of the Holy Ghost. Feed Christ's sheep, feed his lambs. Be vigilant and careful to give to every one their portion in due season. As a scribe fitly instructed in the kingdom of God, bring out of your treasures things new and old, for the instruction, entertainment and edification of your hearers. Take heed to yourself that you be an example to the flock ; an example in faith, spirit, piety, purity and charity---of all the graces of that divine and heavenly religion which you preach. Live upon the all-sufficient God and Saviour whom you preach to others. Give yourself to reading, meditation and prayer, that your profiting may appear unto all. In fine, keep the sacred depositum of the gospel, the solemn charge, in purity and without rebuke : And as you are called to it, commit it with solemn care to faithful men, who may be able to teach others also. Approve yourself in all to God and the consciences of men ; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed ; that by the grace of God you may save yourself and them that hear you ; that so when the chief shepherd shall appear, you may receive a crown of life and glory immarcessible.

A M E N.
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The RIGHT-HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, given by the Rev. *Elisha Rexford*, Pastor of the Church of Christ in New-Stratford.

THE Lord Jesus Christ, the great King and Head of the Chruch, from the great love and regard which he has for his church, hath been graciously pleased to institute the ministry of reconciliation, to be committed unto men. Accordingly, when he ascended up on high, he gave gifts, such as pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of his mystical body, the church. So that now, in every view, especially of the honour of God and the good of souls, it appears of vast concern, that a spirit of love and friendship be cultivated and maintained among the ministers of Christ. Whereby, according to the *genius* of the gospel, we might encourage each others hearts and strengthen each others hands, to a chearful, faithful discharge of the several difficult and important duties of our betrustment. And this is frequently urged and enforced upon us in the sacred writings : Yea, doubtless, this was the very thing designed in the ancient, scripture practice of giving the right Hand of Fellowship. A practice, in its nature of friendly import ; a practice most beautiful and commendable among the ministers of the friendly Jesus, on such solemn, joyful occasions as this. And seeing you have been regularly called and introduced into the stewardship of the gospel ministry in this place : I therefore, in the name, and by the appointment of the council concerned in transacting the sacred solemnities of this day, *Rev'd* and *Dear Sir*, do now give you *this Right Hand*, as a sure pledge of our love, friendship and approbation, as a certain testimony of our fellowship with you, and readiness to aid and assist you in every exigence,

exigence, expecting the same in return from you. We likewise with one voice, bid you a cordial welcome, as a fellow labourer, into the vineyard of our common Lord ; and particularly, we welcome you into the labours of this field, the inclosure of this church of Christ : Where, with their worthy, aged pastor, you are to spend and be spent, in publishing the glad tidings of salvation through a dying Redeemer. Yea brother, we wish you God-speed in this your arduous work ; we wish you much of the Divine Presence and Blessing ; we wish that you may see the pleasure of the Lord, in the conversion of souls, largely prosper in your hands ; we wish you an abundance of the good will of him who dwelt in the burning bush. Yea, our hearts desire and prayer to God is, that you may be long continued a burning and shining light in the candlestick where you are now placed ; that you, and the church, and the people of your charge may dwell together in love and peace ; and that the very God of love and peace may be and dwell with you. A M E N.



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